goods and services, and various non-tangible benefits that accrue from our forests. As regards investment into the forestry sector, 0.94 percent of the total public sector outlay has been allocated to this sector during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

(b) There is no international standard for forest cover. The National Forest Policy of India has stipulated that a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country should be under forest or tree cover.

(c) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amended in 1988 in addition to the Indian Forest Act 1927, and a number of State Forest Acts are enforced to ensure strict control over diversion or loss of forest coverage in the country. Government has also taken a number of steps to increase the forest cover in the country. These include improved protection measures, conservation and development of forests, rehabilitation of degraded forests, afforestration scheme social forestry schemes, participatory forest managements etc.

(d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the highest percentage (92.4%) of forest cover followed by Tripura (89.4%). Haryana has got the lowest percentage (1.2%) of forest cover among the states. The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Pondichery have no forest cover. Pondichery have not legally classified forest area. Haryana which entirely falls in the Indo-Gangetic belt has had less forest area because of agricultural activities being considered more suitable in the past. Social Forestry activities have now been given high priority in the State.

Measures to reduce Pollution

2266. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the survey conducted by "Rajiv Gandhi Foundation" under 'Environmental Literacy Drive' found about 63 zones affected by radiation hazards; and

(b) if so, what measures Government are taking to reduce pollution in these zones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) A report alleging that radiation hazard is on the rise in Lucknow has been published in a section of the press. This report is based on a press release issued by Environment Research Laboratory, which is implementing the project on Environmental Literacy funded by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. This has, however, been contradicted by the surveys conducted by scientists of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. These surveys indicate that radiation levels in Lucknow are in the range normally found in these areas and are due to the natural background radiation. AERB scientists have demonstrated that the apparent high levels of radiation reported by Environmental Research Laboratory are due to the deficiencies of the radiation measurement instruments and not due to any actual presence of extraneous radiation.

(b) Does not arise.

Ban on mining in the country

2267. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) which are the areas in our country where Government have banned mining activity;

(b) whether an assessment of the damage done to the environment ecology and wildlife by such mining activity has been made;

(c) what steps are being taken to implement the ban effectively; and

(d) how many cases of violation of the ban were noticed and what action was taken on them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Except the conservation areas like National Parks and Sanctuaries, mining activity is not banned anywhere in the country. It is, however, being regulated in the areas covered under the provisions of the Notifications on Murud-Janjira, Doon Valley, Dahanu, Coastal Regulation Zone and Aravallies along with other development activities.

(b) Environment assessment of new mining projects is a pre-requisite for initigating the likely adverse impacts. A report on the environmental status of coal mines has also been carried out.

(c) and (d) Does not arise as no ban exists.

Study on animals with the help of World Bank Funds

2268. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study is proposed to be carried out on elephants, leopards and rhinoceros with the help of world bank funds including that in Kanha and other sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the objects and aspects of the study; and

(c) what is the world bank aid sanctioned therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) There is no proposal with this Ministry to carry out a study on elephants, leopards and rhinoceros with the help of World Bank. There is, however, a provision in the West Bengal Forestry Development Protect assisted by the World Bank for preparing action plans based on studies on elephants, leopards and rhinoceros.

(b) and (c) The wildlife and biodiversity component of the World Bank-assisted West Bengal Forestry Development Project aims at improvement of of wildlife and protected areas management. A new wildlife research unit to be based in North Bengal is also proposed. The proposed outlay for the wildlife biodiversity component under this programme is about US $ 1.0 million.

Uganda's calling back of all Expelled Indians

2269. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Uganda has invited all the expelled Indians back to re-establish trade and industry in that country;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take similar action in case of NRIs from Hongkong; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) NRIs have not been expelled from Hong Kong.

(c) Does not arise.

Chinese claim over Arunachal Pradesh

2270. SHRI NYODAK YONGGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the claim of entire area of Arunachal Pradesh as Chinese territory; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction on this claim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The Government are aware that the Chinese Government have claimed approximately